

# **Rebuild Iowa Task Force – Education Meeting**

**July 29, 2008**

**DMACC – Ankeny Campus**

## **Impact on Regents Institutions**

Starting in late May 2008, the Regents institutions faced flooding issues at various levels of seriousness. Hardest hit, of course, was the State University of Iowa with 20 buildings and the utilities system threatened. In a moment, representatives from the State University will speak, giving more details on the aftermath of the flooding. SUI suffered approximately \$232 million in losses.

Iowa State University incurred limited flooding in late May. Clean up and campus operations were able to resume normal schedules in a few days, with the exception of the Veenker Memorial Golf Course, which resumed operations about a month later.

ISU's outlying teaching, research and demonstration farms incurred significant damage to buildings and crops, as well as some livestock being injured. Due to the locations, weather and the condition of crops, it is too early to assess the final damage. Some of these losses may be eligible for reimbursement by FEMA after various insurance coverages and farm programs have been evaluated.

The University of Northern Iowa was officially closed for one-day, but did not sustain material flood damage. Buildings serving as a location for evacuees and disaster workers will require extensive and specialized cleaning before returning to regular use.

All universities may be affected by new or returning students who, because of flood/tornado disasters, may not be able to enroll as planned. Students may also need additional financial aid; those not previously eligible or receiving financial aid may now require financial aid assistance if they are to enroll. Numbers cannot be attached to these possibilities as yet.

ISU reports that applications have increased as has undergraduate and international enrollments; distance education learners are projected to remain level or decrease some. UNI sees a slight drop in applications, which may be normal compared to last year's significant increase; freshman and transfer student enrollment shows an increase, but overall enrollments may be down by 100; no data is yet available on distance education learners.

One other Regent institution – the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, had to send students home during a power outage and a flooded elevator shaft.

## **Flood Recovery Efforts**

Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa were able to offer resources and expertise for disaster recovery efforts.

ISU Extension is deeply involved in the recovery response.

- The Iowa Concern toll-free hotline is providing counseling on stress and loss and has coordinated calls from people who had services, time, money or items to donate to victims.
- Emergency crop meetings have been held and damage assessment to farms and farm facilities, crops, and livestock has been provided.
- CIRAS is assessing the disaster-related needs of Iowa companies and through a recently conducted survey documented that 52% of respondent companies have been affected by flooding. They are working to respond to disruptions affecting the workforce, customer base, utilities and transportation of Iowa businesses.
- Community and economic development specialists are providing facilitation services to communities and groups as they develop flood recovery strategies.
- Volunteer child care centers and programming to provide emergency child care for flood victims have been established.

The ISU Small Business Development Centers are supporting recovery efforts, as well. In Cedar Rapids alone, 30 – 40 small businesses have already received assistance with the paperwork needed for SBA loan applications. Many of them are sole proprietors without the expertise to reconstruct data and records on their own, nor to evaluate their options and make sound business decisions.

Since the EF5 tornado hit the community of Parkersburg, UNI Business and Community Services (BCS) has been actively assisting Parkersburg and the other communities impacted by that natural disaster and the subsequent floods. By BCS's best estimates, more than 1,200 small firms in rural communities have been adversely affected by the tornado and subsequent flooding.

The University of Northern Iowa's Regional Business Center/SBDC serves the needs of rural business owners in Northeast Iowa. The magnitude of this devastation has overwhelmed its staff. They have been inundated by phone calls and emails from community leaders and entrepreneurs across the state, requesting assistance to help these small companies re-assess, re-build and potentially re-open.

Between June 1st and June 30th, the UNI Regional Business Center (RBC) hosted five community meetings throughout NE Iowa with small businesses affected by the disasters. Three hundred and twenty six affected entrepreneurs attended these sessions where information was shared and the short term needs of these business owners assessed. Hundreds more did not and have been provided information short term through MyEntreNet's listserv. Beginning mid-June, a daily Webinar at noon provided an interactive forum for affected business owners to ask questions of SBA, FEMA and city officials. Between June 16th and July 18th, the UNI Regional Business Center put up a large tent along Highway 57 in the midst of the devastated Parkersburg area, and posted an SBDC consultant there five days a week to serve small business owners on a walk in basis. Two additional consultants were dispatched to rural communities on a floating

basis, serving Greene, Waverly, New Hartford and Janesville.

A second series of disaster recovery Webinars is being added to the fall weekly online presentations and a traveling workshop is planned on Disaster Recovery entitled Rebuild? Reopen? Rethink?

UNI's Institute for Decision Making has long been a resource to the economic development efforts of Iowa's communities and regions. IDM has been dedicating substantial resources to recovery and reconstruction efforts in Parkersburg and Butler County for the past six weeks and is poised to extend this service to other impacted communities and counties, such as New Hartford, Waverly, Charles City, Mason City, Greene, Independence, Vinton and others.

### **Presentation by State University of Iowa representatives**

Beth Ingram – Associate Dean, Professor of Economics will present highlights from the July 28, 2008 SUI report to the Board of Regents. Impact on student applications and enrollments appears immaterial. Two summer orientation sessions were cancelled

John Laverty – Associate Director of Admissions will add comments as necessary

### **Conclusion**

University resources and expertise are available to assist Iowans as they plan for recovery. Dedicated faculty and staff are using their professional expertise to assist in this recovery. The Regents institutions are committed to serving the citizens of Iowa as long as they continue to have needs.